

against increasing the speed limit and one that I really had not thought of until he mentioned it to me and that is that it is just so much more comfortable to drive on the roads if you know that you can go 55 and that everybody else is going to go 55 without the feeling of having trucks and other kinds of vehicles bearing down on you at 65 or 70 or 75 and I know something I have experienced over the last several years with the 55 mile an hour speed limit is that it really is just a lot more relaxed to drive around on the highways of our state and I think it makes a lot of sense for that reason as well as the other reasons we know about generally to leave it at 55. Now particularly with respect to this amendment that we are addressing, last Friday we had distributed to you an article that appeared in the World Herald in June discussing in some detail the safety problems we have with our network of interstates around Omaha. Now I am sure a lot of you have driven along Interstate 80 through South Omaha and Senator Labeledz and Senator Kilgarin can address this problem more specifically, where we have essentially a system of ramps that simply was not designed to handle the kind of traffic it is getting now. Some people think, including the police chief in Omaha, Mr. Anderson, that there was defective design in those roads. Other people dispute the allegation that the design is defective but people seem to be unanimous in their agreement that it was not expected that the interstate system around Omaha would have anywhere near the volume of traffic that it has now. As Senator Beyer will indicate the interstate system in Omaha has essentially become a commuter road. In the morning and in the afternoon we have hundreds and hundreds of vehicles that are travelling from west Omaha downtown or in the afternoon, downtown back out to west Omaha. They are on the interstate only fifteen or twenty minutes. They are using it only as part of their travels to and from work and it simply does not make sense given the volume and given the risk and given the danger and given, most important, the fatalities that we have had on that stretch of interstate since 1973, which that World Herald article makes reference to, to raise the speed limit along that particular stretch of road from 55 to 60 or 65 and I would urge you, colleagues, that regardless of your feelings about raising the interstate in central and western Nebraska, raising the speed on the interstate in central and western Nebraska, please allow us in Omaha where we have really a different set of circumstances and a different situation and where the safety reasons have particular bearing, please permit us in Omaha to pass this amendment leaving it at 55. Now Senator Chambers in arguing against this amendment will probably point out the fact that the Roads Department has the authority to leave the speed limit at anything less than 65 at various stretches along the interstate if it wants and I don't dispute that. We